

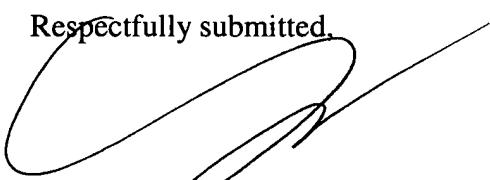
after he or she submits the initial starting bid. As such, the present invention effectively shifts the burden of participating in the competitive bidding process from the purchaser to the seller without the purchaser risking the loss of the benefit of obtaining the desired item at the lowest possible price.

**35 U.S.C. §103(a)**

Claims 2-3, 6, 8 and 9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Godin (U.S. Patent No. 5,890,138) in view of Herz (U.S. Patent No. 5,754,938).

Applicant submits that combining the two cited references would not result in the inventive Internet-based auction method wherein a purchaser is able to obtain pricing information for an item from a broad selection of sellers offering that item; determine a lowest price from the obtained pricing information, and negotiate a final price lower than the lowest price obtained in the pricing information thus gaining the ability to purchase the item at the lowest possible price in a broad market scheme. Further, it would not have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art to fashion a reverse auction process that provides the beneficial result of relieving the purchaser from actively participating in the competitive bidding process without the risk of losing a chance of obtaining the desired item at the best possible price. Neither of the above-cited references teach or suggest such a method and system as according to Applicant's invention. Accordingly, Applicant believes that the invention as claimed embodies patentable subject matter and respectfully requests that such action toward these ends be taken.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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